# Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT REAGAN ACADEMY January 30, 2008

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Reagan Academy on December 4, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

## **Areas of Strength**

The validation team found the following:

#### **General Supervision**

- The self review of the student IEP files was a positive learning experience for those who
  participated.
- The file review results indicated areas that they need to improve and gave instant insight to the teachers into areas where they need to improve.
- A procedure has been implemented to continually correct any compliance issue found with IEPs through a monitoring system.
- The teaching team has been solidified with the hiring of a new teacher to bring the caseload into compliance.
- Students suspected of having a learning disability are referred and evaluated according to state and federal regulations.
- Paraeducators have been trained on their job roles and responsibilities.
- All required federal and state reports have been submitted to the USOE.
- All forms are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- All child find activities are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- All identification and evaluation tools and materials used are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- Reagan Academy follows state rule IV.C. Independent Educational Evaluation as defined in the Utah State Special Education Rules, 2001.
- Reagan Academy conducts a thorough child find process which includes school staff training and public notification.
- A school psychologist is contracted for evaluations and some services to students with disabilities.
- Assistant Teachers are vital for providing services to all students. Parents also reported appreciation for the additional help their students receive from the assistant teachers.
- All eligibility determinations are current and included in special education files.
- Evaluation Summary Reports were included with eligibility determinations and included all assessment data results.
- Physical education is provided to students with disabilities in the same manner as it is provided to students without disabilities in the school.
- Evaluation and eligibility procedures were generally followed.
- Classroom observations were conducted for students determined eligible as having a specific learning disability.

- Students, during interviews, described their special education teachers as accommodating and provide the help the students need.
- Special education files were consistently organized and contained the required materials.
- Confidentiality procedures are in place within the school building. School staff are trained annually on those procedures.
- Reagan Academy is utilizing IEP Pro to complete and monitor special education records.
- During classroom observations, the general education teacher provided services and accommodations (redirection and cueing)as described in the student's IEP
- School staff, when interviewed, described ownership of students with disabilities school-wide and pride in their special education program.
- Special education staff are well trained and focus on the individual needs of their students. A positive rapport/relationship between teaching staff and students was disabilities was observed.
- Eligibility and IEP teams consisted of all required team members, as documented in special education files and reported by parents.
- FFY 2005 Annual Performance Report (APR) requirements were met.

#### Parent Involvement

- Parents are generally pleased with their child's progress and with the IEP that has been developed by the team.
- Parents are considered to be a vital part of the team and participate in all decisions made by the IEP team.
- Parents seem supportive of the school and the special education department.
- The results of the surveys with students, regular education teachers, special education teachers, itinerant personnel and principal seemed to match the same results as to parent involvement at the school. Parents took an active role in the UPIPS process and were willing to help in any way needed. The staff concluded, as did the parents, that the school was making an effort to involve them in all aspects of the child's education.
- Parents are very active in supporting the school and the special education program through donating time, supplies, materials, rewards, etc.
- Parents are notified of their rights to an independent evaluation at no cost to the parents, including travel and cost of the examiner.
- A surrogate parent has been trained and is available when needed.
- Parents were invited to serve on the Steering Committee. They attended all meetings and participated.
- Consent for evaluation from parents is documented prior to conducting the evaluation.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of proposed activities, including evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP implementation, and placement.
- Procedural Safeguards are provided and explained to parents at least annually.
- Parents report receiving copies of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determinations, and IEPs. This was also documented during the file reviews.
- Parent input is sought after and documented in the special education files. Parents also reported that the school asks for their input during IEP and eligibility meetings.
- IEPs document that the IEP team has considered and determined how and when parents will
  receive reports of student progress on IEP goals. Progress reports were also documented.
- Parent involvement is high in Reagan Academy. Parents volunteer at the school and participate in committees, including the UPIPS Stakeholder Steering Committee.
- Parents report a high rate of communication between home and school via in person or email.
- IEP meetings are scheduled at mutually agreeable times, as reported by parents.
- Parents reported that the school facilitates their involvement as a means of improving educational services for their students.
- Parents feel that the special education staff is caring towards their students and tries to resolve parent concerns.

### Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- The team (including parents) develops IEPs with the focus on the individual child.
- The LEA plays a vital role in the IEP process.

- Students are being educated with their non-disabled peers and attend regular classes and are a part of all school and extra-curricular activities.
- All students have been welcomed to the charter school and accommodations have been afforded to all students.
- All IEPs are current and included in special education files.
- PLAAFP statements included all requirements (current data and how the disability affects the students' involvement and progress in the general curriculum).
- IEP goals were measurable and addressed all areas of student need (as described in the PLAAFP statement).
- IEPs included a listing of special education and related services, as well as the location and amount of services needed.
- Accommodations are listed on the IEP and provided to teachers during collaboration meetings and through copies of needed IEP information.
- Special education meeting are held weekly to review student needs and progress.
- IEPs address how the students will access the general education curriculum, as well as participate in U-PASS.
- Special factors were considered and documented in student IEPs.
- Special education services begin as soon as possible following the IEP meeting.
- Decisions regarding student placement is made by the IEP team. Placement discussions begin at the general education classroom progress up the continuum as needed.
- IEPs are developed collaboratively with all required team members.
- Special education teachers are knowledgeable regarding U-PASS requirements and documentation.
- U-PASS data is used to drive curriculum, instructional, and budgetary decisions.
- Students, when interviewed, could describe the IEP process and see the positive effects that special education has had on their academic progress.

#### **Transitions**

Reagan Academy does not have students of transition age at this time.

# **Disproportionality**

Primary home language and race/ethnicity are documented in special education files.

### Areas of Systemic Noncompliance\*

- Evaluation Procedures: all areas of concern not assessed; evaluation procedures not followed;
  - Emotional Disturbance Disability Category –The team did not document at least 3 educational observations; the team did not document the behaviors for which the student was referred.
- Initial evaluation timelines exceeded.
- Notice of Meeting for eligibility determination, IEP development, and placement review incomplete.

<sup>\*</sup>These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.